

# ACCREDITATION EVALUATION REPORT

**Riverside City College  
Norco Campus  
2001 Third Street  
Norco, CA 92860-2600**

A Confidential Report Prepared for the Accrediting Commission  
for Community and Junior Colleges

This report represents the findings of the evaluation team that visited  
Riverside City College, Norco Campus on  
October 8 – 11, 2007

Dr. Tyree Wieder, Chair

## LOS ANGELES VALLEY COLLEGE COMPREHENSIVE VISITING TEAM ROSTER

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## SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

Institution: Riverside Community College District, Norco Campus

Date of Visit: October 8-11, 2007

Team Chair: Dr. Tyree Wieder, President, Los Angeles Valley College

The team chair, a 9-member accreditation team, and an assistant visited Norco Campus from October 8-11, 2007 in order to verify the self study report, review existing evidence to determine how well the institution meets the Standards of Accreditation, provide recommendations to the institution on how to improve or better meet the standards, and make a confidential recommendation to the Commission on whether to grant initial accreditation, grant candidacy or deny candidacy.

The team chair and team assistant made a preliminary visit to Norco Campus on August 31, 2007. They met with President Brenda Davis, determined the team room location, and finalized arrangements for the visit. The team chair received training on June 26 and joined other team members for an all-day training on September 5 in Oakland. Team members received the self study and supplementary documents, including evidence on a CD, in September.

Norco is an educational center that is part of the Riverside Community College District. Therefore, two of our team members met at the district office on the morning of October 8 to conduct interviews with district personnel. In the late afternoon and early evening of October 10, several members of the team, as well as the team chair, attended three Board of Trustee subcommittee meetings at Riverside City College.

During the four-day visit, members visited 30 classrooms, conducted over 120 meetings with individuals and groups, and attended several committee meetings. Having read the self study and evidence provided on disc and on the website in advance, the team examined hard copy evidence in the team room after arriving on campus.

The team was pleased at the promptness and courtesy of campus staff and administration in providing evidence requested, setting up a well-equipped team room, and arranging appointments quickly and efficiently. The team was impressed by the willingness of so many campus and district personnel to meet with us and answer our questions thoroughly and honestly. Committee meetings were scheduled so that team members could attend and experience the campus community in action.

The self study report format was straightforward and readable, employing relevant and specific language to address individual components and eligibility requirements. However, the self evaluation sections were, for the most part, reaffirmations of the descriptive sections rather than self evaluative analysis. The reason for this became apparent in interviews conducted by the team, which revealed that the self study was edited after completion (at the direction of district administration), and the self-evaluative critiques (anything starting with "However") were excised from the final report. As a result, the team could find no context to support some of the



planning agenda items, all 91 of which remained in the self study. This weakened the usefulness of the document, not only for the team, but also for the campus community to use as a guide for self improvement. In addition, planning agendas were often characterized by “continue to work on...” and lacked references to responsible individuals or time frames for inception, progress, or completion.

## INTRODUCTION

The Norco Campus was founded in 1991 to meet the needs of the area’s growing communities. Enrollment has continued to increase steadily, from 3,088 students at its opening to 8,600 students in fall 2006. In 1995, the Airey Library and Applied Technology buildings were completed. The passage of Bond Measure C in 2004, as well as federal and state grants, has made funds available to continue its building program. The campus has 66 full-time and 235 part-time faculty, 62 staff, and 15 management personnel. Norco offers 27 academic and occupational programs. Faculty teach over 600 course sections in 14 on-campus buildings and eight off-site locations, including a high school opened in 2006 on a portion of the campus’ land. Major changes since the 2001 accreditation visit to Riverside City College (of which Norco was a campus) have been the addition of seven administrative positions (with modifications to six administrative positions) and several faculty coordinator positions through reassigned time. The budget increased from \$11.1 million in 2001 to \$18.7 in 2006, and the number of class sections grew from 560 to 669.

The campus, which was granted eligibility in 2005, has taken steps to move toward independent status by participating in a “shadow” accreditation during the Riverside Community College District accreditation in 2001. Actions taken by the district included the adoption of a curriculum-centered strategic planning model and a learner-centered curriculum model. Subsequently, the district prepared a midterm report and in 2004 filed a substantive change report to create a single district three-college system and rename Riverside Community College to Riverside City College. The ACCJC deemed the campus eligible to conduct a self study using the Eligibility, Candidacy, and Initial Accreditation Manual.

## TEAM COMMENDATIONS TO NORCO CAMPUS

Norco Campus clearly focuses on students.

- Norco Campus’ Student Services Division is commended for providing exemplary programs that reflect sensitivity to the diversity of the student population; these programs include Puente, the Talented Tenth, Title V Basic Skills, and the STAR program.
- Norco Campus is commended for the extensive services offered in the student learning support labs (Tutorial Services, Math Lab, CIS Computer Lab, Writing and Reading Center).
- Norco administration, staff, and faculty are to be commended for their efforts in designing and implementing a robust planning model grounded in the Annual Program Review Process. The current planning model reflects and embraces the progress made



with identifying student learning outcomes, is data driven, and represents the collaborative efforts of the entire campus community.

- Norco Campus is to be commended for its success in obtaining state and local funding for capital construction projects and the maintenance of its existing facilities.
- Norco Campus is to be commended for a collegial atmosphere and respect that characterize relations among individuals and groups. There is a clear unity of purpose and connectedness among faculty and staff in the desire to support student success and provide the best learning environment for students. Such cohesion, collaboration, and mutual respect are rare!

## **TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS TO NORCO CAMPUS**

### **Campus Recommendation 1:**

The team recommends that the campus prepare for greater procedural and operational authority as an independent college. This should be demonstrated in several key aspects of student learning programs and services, leadership, and governance. These include preparation for full authority of on-site administration, the development and approval of curriculum, and the process of planning and allocation. (Standards I.B, II.A, II.B, IV.A)

### **Campus Recommendation 2:**

The team recognizes that significant progress has occurred with Student Learning Outcomes. However the team recommends that the efforts be accelerated to expand recurrent cycles of authentic assessment and campus-wide dialogue on results. (Standards I.B, II.A, II.B)

### **Campus Recommendation 3:**

The team recommends that strategic planning include the total cost of ownership for allocations such as staffing, professional development, technology, and planning for all new facilities and capital projects, including long range planning. (Standards III.A.2, 6; III.B.2.a; III.C.1.b, d; III.C.2; III.D.1.a-d, 3)

## **DISTRICT RECOMMENDATIONS**

**(shared in the Riverside City College and Moreno Valley Campus reports)**

### **District Recommendation 1:**

The teams recommend that the Board of Trustees and Chancellor develop and implement a district strategic plan that will:

- Align with the district mission statement (Standard I.A.1, III.D.1);
- Provide a framework for the college's/campuses' strategic plans (Standard I.B.4); and
- Drive the allocation of district resources for the college, campuses, and district office (Standard III.D.1).

### **District Recommendation 2:**

The teams recommend that the district and college/campuses develop, implement, and assess a resource allocation model that

- Is open, transparent, and inclusive (Standards I.B, IV.B.3.c);
- Is widely disseminated and reviewed periodically for effectiveness (Standards III.D.2.b, III.D.3); and
- Is linked to the strategic plans at the district, college, and campus levels (Standards I.A.1, III.D.1.a-d, IV.B.3.c).

### **District Recommendation 3:**

The teams recommend that college, campus, and district administrators and faculty delineate, document, and assess:

- The roles and responsibilities between and among the district's entities; (Standard IV.B.3; Policy and Procedures for the Evaluation of Institutions in Multi-College/Multi-Unit Districts or Systems)
- The roles and scope of authority of the CEOs at the district and college/campus levels; (Standard IV.A.2)
- A feedback loop between and among the entities on key issues, such as planning, staffing priorities, etc. (Standards IV.A.2; IV.B.3, 4, 6).

### **District Recommendation 4:**

As recommended by the 2001 accreditation visiting team, the teams recommend that the district more clearly specify the existing personnel selection procedures and develop procedures for the selection of educational administrators, including the position of the chancellor. These selection processes must include input from the various college/campuses constituent groups (Standards III.A.1, 3; IV.A.2).

### **District Recommendation 5:**

As recommended by the 2001 accreditation visiting team, the teams recommend the Board of Trustees implement its recently approved process for self-evaluation (Standard IV.B.1.g).

## **RESPONSES TO RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PREVIOUS TEAM**

**(These recommendations were made to Riverside City College and not to the Norco Campus. They are included in this report for information only.)**

### **2001 Team Recommendation 1**

*The team recommends that Riverside Community College proceed with its plan to "establish a process for regular review and revision of the mission statement" to better guide planning and to recognize the unique aspects of the District's emerging three-college status (1.3, 1.4)*



In response to this recommendation, Norco Campus developed a mission statement in 2003, which was revised and approved by the Board of Trustees in spring of 2006. The campus established a regular process for review by placing it as an agenda item for the first meeting of the Norco Strategic Planning Committee each academic year. There is also evidence that the college planning processes are aligned with and have emerged from the central themes articulated in the campus mission statement. The recommendation has been met.

### **2001 Team Recommendation 2**

*The team recommends that Riverside Community College formalize and make known to the college community its developing strategic planning process, which should integrate educational, financial, facilities, and human resource planning (3.B3, 4.B.1, 8.5, 10.A.3), provide for involvement of faculty, staff, and students and effectively involve all three campuses (3.B1, 10.B.6, 10.B.9, 10.B.10). The planning process should utilize information from program reviews (3.A.4, 3.B.2, 4.D.1, 4.D.6), more closely integrate college planning and budgeting processes (3.B.1, 9.A.1), and include regular evaluation and reporting of institutional outcomes (3.A.3, 3.C.1, 3.C.2).*

Both the district and the individual campuses have responded to this recommendation by developing a comprehensive approach to planning driven by program review. Adopting a Curriculum-Centered Strategic Planning Model and a Learner Centered Curriculum Model in 2002 signified that the district and its campuses were willing to restructure their overall evaluation, planning, and budgetary processes in line with the new accreditation standards. Development of new planning processes has been a coordinated effort for the district and the campuses over the past six years. There has been significant growth in Norco's increased responsibility for the development and implementation of planning processes. A number of the primary groups -- the Norco Strategic Planning Committee (including the nine subcommittees), Norco Academic Planning Council, and the Norco Academic Senate -- have been established at the Norco Campus, along with inclusive dialogue among campus constituencies. The adoption of annual program review updates in 2006 provides for timely resource allocation needs to be known and prioritized. The district has improved the availability of institutional data to support local campus planning, as evidenced by the Fact Book, which contains a number of research reports that separate district and campus data. Discipline specific data is also provided for program review. Norco has demonstrated significant progress in developing an integrated evaluation, planning, and budgetary process at the campus level. The recommendation has been met.

### **2001 Team Recommendation 3**

*The team recommends that Riverside Community College ensure that its curriculum review and approval process include regular updates and review of all course outlines, specific approval of distance education course and accepted practices for the establishment of course sequences. (4.B.2, 4.B.3, 4.D.5, 4.D.6)*

In response to this recommendation, the Riverside Community College District tied the updating and review of all course outlines to a four-year program review cycle, which includes all courses,



course sequences, and distance education modalities. The most recent program review cycle began in fall 2003 and is scheduled for completion in fall 2007. The District Curriculum Committee (DCC) published a Curriculum Development Guide. These processes are integrated with the development of student learning outcomes and validation of all limitations on enrollment. Training in the new policies and procedures, including the development of SLOs, was provided through workshops. To facilitate the implementation of these policies and procedures, the District Academic Senate established a subcommittee on Prerequisites, Co-requisites, Advisories, and Limitations on enrollment (PCAL) whose responsibility is to approve any limitations on enrollment before the course is forwarded to the Curriculum Committee. To address the need for a separate approval process for courses offered in any distance education modality, the DCC developed and implemented a Distance Education approval form, which must be satisfactorily completed prior to any new or established course being offered online, as a hybrid course or via teleweb. To ensure that these districtwide policies and procedures are instituted as the Norco Campus moves toward independence as a college, a Norco Curriculum Committee was created in fall 2006 by vote of the Norco Academic Senate. The district has adequately addressed this recommendation.

#### **2001 Team Recommendation 4**

*The team recommends that hiring and evaluation practices for all categories of staff move from practice to policy; that policies to ensure fairness in hiring be adopted for all categories of employees, including adjunct and interim faculty; and that all written hiring and evaluation procedures be followed consistently, according to current adopted procedures and timeliness (7.D.1, 7.D.2, & D.3).*

Norco has a clear and specific process for evaluations, and they appear to be sent out and received on a regular basis. There are specific written procedures for hiring in all positions with the exception of educational administrators. The procedures do need to be more detailed, as is pointed out in District Recommendation 4, which also notes that a procedure needs to be developed for hiring educational administrators. Further, the hiring procedures should be reviewed with the consultation of different groups within the district. The recommendation has been partially met.

#### **2001 Team Recommendation 5**

*The team recommends that the Board of Trustees implement a self-evaluation procedure (10.A.5).*

Although the Board of Trustees created a policy on self-evaluation in May 2007, the self evaluation has not yet been implemented. The recommendation has not been met.



## **ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

### **ER 1 – Authority**

The team confirmed that the Norco Campus is an educational center of Riverside City College and is in good standing with the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

### **ER 2 – Mission**

The team confirmed that the current mission statement was approved by the Board of Trustees in June 2006. It is clearly defined and appropriate to the constituency it serves. The mission statement does describe the institution's commitment to achieving established learning outcomes.

### **ER 3 – Governing Board**

The Norco Campus is an educational center of the Riverside Community College District. The District has a Board of Trustees comprised of five elected members from the community and one student trustee elected by the students in the District. The team confirmed that the District has a governing board responsible for the quality, integrity, and financial stability of the institution and for ensuring the mission of the campus is carried out. Its membership is sufficient in size and composition to fulfill its obligations.

### **ER 3 – Chief Executive Officer**

The team confirmed that the campus president is the chief executive officer and is primarily responsible for the operation of the campus. The president reports directly to the District Chancellor.

### **ER 5 – Administrative Capacity**

In addition to the campus president and two vice presidents, the campus has three deans, one assistant, and seven campus directors. The team confirmed that the campus has sufficient and well-qualified staff to provide the administrative support needed to support the mission of the campus.

### **ER 6 – Operational Status**

The team confirmed that the campus is indeed operational. Students appear to be actively engaged in the pursuit of the campus' program offerings, which include associate degrees, vocational certificates, and transfer curriculum.

### **ER 7 – Degrees**

The team confirmed that the Norco Campus offers over 27 Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degrees and a variety of certificates. Programs offered are primarily in business and technology fields. All requirements can be met on the Norco Campus.

### **ER 8 – Educational Programs**

The team confirmed that the degree programs offered by the campus are congruent with its mission and are based on recognized higher education fields of study. They are sufficient in content and length and are conducted at levels of quality and rigor appropriate to the degrees offered.

### **ER 9 – Academic Credit**

The team confirmed that the campus awards academic credits based on generally accepted practices in degree-granting institutions of higher education.

### **ER 10 – Student Learning and Achievement**

The team confirmed that the 07-08 Catalog for the Riverside Community College District contains the Board-approved comprehensive statement of General Education SLOs. Regular and systematic assessment of their achievement is in the beginning stages.

### **ER 11 – General Education**

The team confirmed that the campus defines and incorporates into all of its degree programs a substantial component of general education designed to ensure breadth of knowledge and promote intellectual inquiry. The general requirement is 18-23 units.

### **ER 12 – Academic Freedom**

The team confirmed that faculty and students at the campus are free to examine and test all knowledge appropriate to their discipline or area of major study as ensured by Board Policy 4030 which endorses the American Association of University Professors' Statement on Academic Freedom.

### **ER 13 – Faculty**

The team confirmed that the campus has 68 full-time faculty and approximately 235 adjunct faculty. The faculty contract and faculty handbook have clear statements of responsibilities regarding development and review of curriculum, as well as assessment of learning.

### **ER 14 – Student Services**

The team confirmed that the campus provides appropriate student services for all students. Those services support student learning and development within the context of the institutional mission. The campus also provides several programs that stress sensitivity to diverse students.



### **ER 15 – Admissions**

The team confirmed that the campus has adopted and adheres to admission policies consistent with its mission that specify the qualifications and ensure that all students are appropriately qualified for the program and course offerings.

### **ER 16 – Information and Learning Resources**

The team confirmed that the campus provides long-term access to sufficient information and learning resources and services to support its mission and instructional programs in whatever format and wherever they are offered.

### **ER 17 – Financial Resources**

The team confirmed that the campus documents its funding base and financial resources through the Riverside Community College District and this information is reviewed on an annual basis. The campus has established a sub-committee of the Norco Strategic Planning Council that deals specifically with campus financial resource needs.

### **ER 18 – Financial Accountability**

The team confirmed that the Riverside Community College District annually undergoes and makes available an external financial audit by a certified public accounting firm.

### **ER 19 – Institutional Planning and Evaluation**

The team confirmed that the Riverside Community College District publishes a Fact Book and Effectiveness Manual containing, among other data, success, transfer, and retention rates. In addition, the campus, through established committee structures and a master plan, coordinates planning, assessment, and improvement with the RCCD.

### **ER 20 – Public Information**

The team confirmed that the campus meets this requirement. The Riverside Community College District publishes a catalog for all three sites -- Riverside City College, Moreno Valley Campus, and Norco Campus -- in one document. The catalog contains all required information.

### **ER 21 – Relations with the Accrediting Commission**

The team confirmed that the campus adheres to the eligibility requirements and accreditation standards and policies of the Commission.

## **ACCREDITATION THEMES**

### **Institutional Commitments**

The campus mission statement reflects a commitment on the part of the entire institution to facilitate and promote student learning. Norco uses its resources by establishing programs and services aligned with its mission and student population to help students reach their goals. All campus constituencies participated in crafting the institution's revised mission statement. The campus utilizes demographic information to create services to meet student needs. It is evident that there is a great deal of collaboration and widespread participation in decision-making to properly allocate resources to support the campus' commitment to student success.

### **Evaluation, Planning, and Improvement**

Program review is used at Norco to evaluate, plan, and improve its programs and services. The four-year cycle is supplemented by annual reviews, which serve as the basis for prioritization of requests. The campus has made significant progress in organizing its evaluation and planning processes over the last few years to prepare to meet the needs of an independent college.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

Norco is clearly committed to using student learning outcomes to improve student achievement. The campus community has taken steps to engage in dialogue on student learning, and now needs to focus on the assessment cycle and accelerate these activities in the years ahead. The campus needs to continue to discuss SLO assessment and its role in improving student learning.

### **Organization**

Organizational structures have been put in place at Norco to support a learner-centered environment. At the campus level, organizational structures appear to be strong. However, by nature of being district-centered for so many years, the campus has been dependent on structures outside of its control. The campus community needs to understand what will happen as it takes on more responsibility and how individuals and groups will deal with these new responsibilities once the educational center becomes an independent college.

### **Dialogue**

The Norco Campus is engaged in self-reflective dialogue on many levels, and is especially connected with and receptive to the larger community (e.g., the business community, JFK High School). The Norco Strategic Planning Committee, in particular, gives all constituents a forum and a chance to participate in dialogue about the effectiveness of its policies and practices. Students are given many opportunities to participate in dialogue and be engaged.

### **Institutional Integrity**

The campus demonstrates integrity in its policies and processes. The institution has shown an interest in promoting diversity and in supporting its diverse student population through a number of student support services. Hiring, evaluation, and financial reporting are examples of areas in which the campus has proven its integrity.



## **Standard I**

### **Institutional Mission and Effectiveness**

#### **A. Mission**

##### **General Comments**

The mission statement for Norco was developed through broadly participatory processes at the local level and abundant dialogue with appropriate district bodies. The mission was board-approved in June 2006, and formally incorporated in the Board Policy revision of May 15, 2007. The mission for Norco Campus reflects a commitment to student achievement and learning outcomes. However, some evaluative elements have emerged recently and are still too new to assess. The Norco mission statement was reviewed on August 30, 2007, as part of an educational master plan workshop that was attended by both faculty and staff. The existing Norco mission statement was reaffirmed and included in the draft Educational Master Plan approved by the Norco Strategic Planning Co-Chairs Council on October 2, 2007. The campus has not yet done a thorough job of promulgating the mission statement to students and the public.

##### **Findings and Evidence**

Since the campus mission statement was developed after the Norco's student learning programs and services were essentially already in place, alignment between the statement and those programs and services is strong. The mission statement identifies an array of general student goals to be served, as appropriate to public community colleges: transfer, job entry, job upgrade, continuing education, and enrichment. The mission also includes the "technology" identity of the Norco Campus, tying it to the needs of the local business community. Further, the mission statement references student achievement of SLOs and on-going improvement. Institutional effectiveness is assessed through the recently overhauled program review process. The process appears to provide a sense of community within disciplines for many faculty members, some of whom are often the only full-time person in their disciplines at Norco.

Although the campus has a local curriculum committee and a local curriculum development process the utilization of a uniform and unified curriculum appears to limit the extent to which *academic* programs reflect local conditions, demographics, and preferences.—This is commendable at one level—student movement within the district is facilitated—but at the same time may have served to reduce the sense of campus identity among academic faculty and staff.

A broad array of exemplary student services programs has emerged, most serving a small number of students. Importantly, the mission has figured heavily in the assessment and planning dialogue that led to the proposal for a student services building.

Assessment of overall campus effectiveness reflects job placement data, reports from transfer institutions, degree and certificate completion data, and data-driven reviews of load, retention, and persistence, as well as assessment of course-level student learning outcomes. (Standard I.A.1)

The mission statement was approved by the Board of Trustees and has been published. (Standard I.A.2)

Provisions have been made for revisiting and revising the mission statement, which is less than two years old. This process is scheduled to begin with the first meeting of the NSPC in Fall 2007. (Standard I.A.3)

As part of program review and local instructional program development and approval processes, faculty and staff regularly assess alignment of programs and services with the mission. Since the mission statement is broad, as befits public community college education, it seems likely that current and future programs and services at Norco Campus will remain tightly aligned with the mission statement. (Standard I.A.4)

### **Conclusions**

The team believes that Norco Campus has largely met Standard I.A.

### **Recommendations**

#### **District Recommendation 1:**

The teams recommend that the Board of Trustees and Chancellor develop and implement a district strategic plan that will:

- Align with the district mission statement (Standards I.A.1, III.D.1);
- Provide a framework for the college's/campuses' strategic plans (Standard I.B.4); and
- Drive the allocation of district resources for the college, campuses, and district office (Standard III.D.1).

#### **District Recommendation 2:**

The teams recommend that the district and college/campuses develop, implement, and assess a resource allocation model that

- Is open, transparent, and inclusive (Standards I.B, IV.B.3.c);
- Is widely disseminated and reviewed periodically for effectiveness (Standards III.D.2.b, III.D.3); and
- Is linked to the strategic plans at the district, college, and campus levels (Standards I.A.1, III.D.1.a-d, IV.B.3.c).

## **B. Improving Institutional Effectiveness**

### **General Comments**

Overall, the campus appears to have made progress in reorganizing evaluation, planning, and budgetary processes from those that reflected the needs of an educational center to the more inclusive infrastructure needed to become a candidate for college status. Significant references were made in the self study to progress made in student learning outcomes, but it would appear



that the level of implementation is still largely at a developmental level with little evidence cited for the effectiveness of measuring the assessment component. There were clear indications, however, that work on these areas is planned and in progress. Because so much of the integration of evaluation, planning, and budgetary processes within a student learning outcomes matrix is so new, the entire process may need to mature to ascertain how effectively the campus meets this standard. The major issue at this point involves budgetary processes and how allocations of funding will be made to the campus. The Budget Allocation Model (BAM), which is expected to address this issue, is currently under discussion and has not yet been implemented.

### **Findings and Evidence**

Evidence of ongoing, collegial, and self reflective dialogue was evident at many levels since the campus began to work on becoming an independent college following the last accreditation visit to Riverside City College in 2001. As much of the oversight and governance of the educational center was located at the district level, the campus and district over past six years have been engaged in the ongoing task of preparing the Norco Campus to assume independent college status. During this same period, the overall evaluation, planning, and budgetary processes at a local level were undergoing significant changes to reflect the new accreditation standards, which required increased dialogue among all campus constituencies. Early evidence of the campus' commitment to student learning was seen in the 2002 adoption of a Curriculum-Centered Strategic Planning model and the Learner-Centered Curriculum model that is currently in place and central to development of the student learning outcomes framework and planning processes. The establishment of the principle planning units -- the Norco Strategic Planning Committee (NSPC) and its nine subcommittees, the Norco Academic Planning Council (NAPC), and the Academic Senate and its two subcommittees (the Curriculum Committee and the Program Review and Assessment Committee) -- significantly expanded the need for broader representation to engage in dialogue regarding new campus policies and procedures. (Standard I.B.1)

Review of the campus mission statement is an annual agenda item for the NSPC. The most recent revision was in 2006. Other evidence of recent improvements arising from ongoing campus dialogue is seen in the 2006 revisions to the program review process of an annual program review update and continuing efforts to develop a student learning outcomes model integrated with and central to overall planning efforts. The team confirmed that the campus understands that dialogue regarding the development of the student learning outcomes model is an ongoing process and will require sustained effort across the campus. (Standard I.B.1)

In spring 2007, the Norco Campus began the process of developing a comprehensive planning framework to guide its progress to becoming an independent college within a multi-campus district. The campus subsequently developed the Norco College Educational Master Plan, published in August 2007, which specifies five primary campus goals and 24 objectives that serve as key indicators to measure progress toward achieving its goals. The team confirmed that the master plan emerged out of an inclusive and collaborative process involving the advisory capacity of NAPC, NSPC, the District Strategic Committee, and the Board of Trustees along with guidance from the STRATUS Consulting Team. Within the framework of this overall



planning effort, greater specificity for planning was developed within the Academic Master Plan, the Facilities Master Plan, and the Technology Standards Master Plan. Program review is the foundation for all planning process, and the annual program review update process ensures broad based participation and awareness of ongoing planning efforts as well as providing annual assessment of effectiveness at the unit level. Currently, information related to progress in meeting campus goals is distributed to the campus through reports, minutes, and other documents both in hard copy and on the campus website. (Standard I.B.2)

The goals and objectives of program review serve as the foundation for the campus planning process. An unstated goal for the campus has been to make it a priority to develop the necessary governance structure, policies, and practices needed to ensure that campus goals are implemented and evaluated. The Norco College Educational Master Plan is new, so it is difficult to determine at this time how effective the campus has been in achieving its goals. As "Improve Student Learning Outcomes" is one of the eight strategic initiatives described in the District Strategic Plan, the campus is aware of the need to continue developing assessment practices to evaluate its effectiveness related to student learning. (Standard I.B.2)

The campus has demonstrated steady progress since the last accreditation visit in the development and implementation of an integrated planning process guided by the campus mission. Program review, and particularly the annual program review update process, functions as the foundation for overall planning efforts, providing the NAPC and the NPSC with information needed to establish the budgetary priorities related to instructional, student service, and institutional needs. The NSPC co-chairs examine and refine priority recommendations made by the NAPC that are finalized by the NSPC, comprised of representatives of the entire campus community, including students. Discussions are conducted in open meetings, which everyone can attend to voice their opinions. The team confirmed that the entire planning process at the campus level is inclusive, porous, and flexible; priority recommendations for resource allocations can be reconfigured to meet campus needs before being finalized and sent to the president. (Standard I.B.3)

Overall evaluation of institutional effectiveness for the campus is the responsibility of the district offices of Institutional Research and Institutional Reporting. The district includes student enrollment and performance data in the campus instructional program review process to provide disciplines with indirect measures of student enrollment, success, and progress. The district appears to understand the campus need for access to campus level enrollment and student performance data; its Fact Book has a range of data that now includes breakout enrollment and student performance data by individual campus. The site visit confirmed that the campus is developing a culture and appreciation for using available data in a cycle of evaluation and improvement. Campus enrollment management efforts are supported through weekly enrollment reports generated by the district and posted on the district website. Student enrollment trends, demographic shifts, student performance, and student learning outcomes are an integral part of the program review process and are evaluated on an annual basis. However, it is not clear whether the current level of data provided by the district can meet the needs of the campus as it becomes more independent from district oversight. The team felt that the campus might benefit from increased campus based research expertise to more effectively support program review and planning. (Standard I.B.3)



The campus has made a strong commitment to developing and implementing a cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, and resource allocation that fosters improvement. The planning process at the campus level is inclusive, robust, well thought out, and attentive to campus needs, but what happens to the campus established priorities when they move on for district consideration was a mystery to the team and requires serious scrutiny. It will be important for the campus to maintain the autonomy of the planning and budgetary processes it has established locally when final budgetary processes at the district are determined. (Standard I.B.3)

Norco encourages participation by campus constituencies, including students where appropriate, in the planning process through participation in department and discipline meetings and committees. Full-time faculty are required by contract to have membership on one committee, although it was evident from the site visit that the majority participate in more. The team confirmed that there has been remarkable participation in the development and implementation of the overall program review and planning process. Initial resource prioritization and allocation discussions primarily occur through interaction of the NAPC, the NSPC, and the Strategic Planning Co-Chairs Council, which represents the entire range of campus operations, with each of the nine areas represented by a faculty member and a classified staff member with equal speaking and voting rights in prioritizing needs proposed by the Academic Planning Council. Through annual program review updates instructional and student service units establish priorities for their resource needs. The team confirmed that the entire planning process is broad based and that priorities are visible to the campus community and arrived at through a democratic process. The team also confirmed that budget priorities are subject to modification at the campus level as needs arise. Final budget prioritization decisions are made in an open form through consensus of the entire campus community. (Standard I.B.4)

Evidence of the campus' commitment to seeking additional resources to more effectively support student learning was seen in the Title V, TRIO, and other grants currently being implemented. Although evidence was provided in the self study to demonstrate that the strategies emerging from the planning/budget process have led to improved institutional effectiveness, due to its newness, it will require more time to gauge the overall effectiveness of the current planning and budgetary framework. As noted, movement of finalized budget priorities to the district and how campus priorities are handled are not at all clear. The lack of transparency for budgetary processes at the district level is a concern to the team. (Standard I.B.4)

The primary responsibility for assessing the overall campus institutional effectiveness still resides at the district level, and the campus is dependent on the Institutional Research and Institutional Report offices for the data to support program review and overall institutional effectiveness. The Fact Book represents the central document for describing district and campus assessment practices and findings associated with institutional effectiveness. This report contains enrollment, demographic, and student outcome indicators, external scan data on service areas along with faculty demographics and load performance by discipline that is broken out by campus. The district research offices also provide demographic and student performance indicators that are embedded within program review at the unit level. Assessment of student learning outcomes occurs at the campus level, and although progress has been made, the overall development of assessment practices at the discipline and program level is in the developmental



stages (according to the rubric distributed to the team). The district is in the process of developing an Institutional Research website to increase access to and awareness of institutional effectiveness data for the campus and public. Assessment data is distributed to local campuses, state and federal agencies, high schools, colleges, and workforce and business partners in the general service area. (Standard I.B.5)

Reoccurring systematic evaluation of institutional processes occurs through the annual program review update process that includes self assessments, goals, action plans, and priorities for resources. Both quantitative and qualitative data emerging from this process inform planning units with timely and appropriate information to establish budgetary priorities to best meet the needs of the student population and meet campus goals. Research reports and data provided by the district also support campus planning activities with the opportunity to respond to shifts in campus, student, and community needs. Norco's Educational Master Plan will provide the campus with an overall evaluation of institutional effectiveness. Although the campus has demonstrated a strong commitment and significant progress in developing a student learning outcomes model, the process needs to mature as a viable and sustainable process at all levels. The site visit confirmed that English, Computer Information Services, Mathematics, and Engineering have implemented significant changes leading to improvement resulting from SLO assessment. Although the campus is well on its way to meeting this standard, it must continue to develop a cycle of evaluation, planning, resources allocation, and improvement based on SLOs. Confusion over district budgetary processes makes it difficult at this time to fully understand how such a cycle leading to improvements can be made. At the local level, the cycle is well implemented and would meet the standard if the district budget prioritization were better understood. (Standard I.B.6)

Currently, a collaborative districtwide four-year academic program review process is in place for instructional programs, student support services, the library, and other learning support services. Through annual program review updates, the campus gathers evidence to evaluate effectiveness of programs and services through both indirect student performance measures and emerging student learning outcomes assessments. Additional evidence of overall institutional effectiveness is provided annually through analysis of enrollment and student performance indicators provided by the district research office. There has been steady progress in implementing a student learning outcomes framework throughout instructional and student service units, yet there is much to be done in developing an assessment process that can provide the campus planning units with direct evidence of student learning. Currently, program review does require units to respond to a variety of student enrollment and performance indicators provided by district research to shape discussion for improvements, but these indicators are primarily indirect in nature. The campus must continue its efforts to develop a student learning model that can provide more direct evidence of student learning to fully meet this standard. Although the campus has recently hired a .5 FTE Outcomes Assessment Specialist to support and assist instructional and student service units with the development and measurement of SLOs, the position is funded by Title V money, and has a primary responsibility to support the grant on the Norco Campus. There was clear evidence that both instructional and student services have implemented improvements over the past two years as a result of evaluating their units, but the team was concerned that additional support to interpret and use institutional research as well as support for the assessment of SLOs may be needed. (Standard I.B.7)



## **Conclusions**

Norco has designed and implemented a robust planning model grounded in the annual program review process and representing the collaborative efforts of the entire campus community. Overall, the campus is to be commended for the significant progress it has made in the development and implementation of a new governance structure, an integrated planning process that effectively addresses resource allocation priorities through annual program review updates, a student learning outcomes model, and other conditions associated with establishing the foundations for candidacy as an independent college. While still new, the overall structure that the campus has been developing over the past six years is clearly aligned with and supports the intent and spirit of the current accreditation standards. Campus planning integration appears to have moved to a positive level of proficiency (according to the rubric distributed to the team).

Evidence of this commitment to the standards is seen in the 2002 adoption of the Curriculum-Centered Strategic Planning Model and a Learner Centered Curriculum Model as the foundation for the development and implementation of a student learning outcomes model that functions as the principle theme across all campus practices. Yet because so many of the practices and policies are new, evidence to support their overall effectiveness is sparse. Significant progress has been made in developing and implementing a student learning outcomes model, yet much work remains, especially in assessment. There are also questions regarding the ability of the district to provide the necessary data to support overall institutional effectiveness and the program review process. The most serious issue is the lack of transparency of the budget priority process at the district level, and although the campus' planning and budget process are linked, visible, and a result of campus consensus, it is not clear how effective this planning structure can be without a better understanding of the district prioritization process.

## **Recommendations**

### **Campus Recommendation 1:**

The team recommends that the campus prepare for greater procedural and operational authority as an independent college. This should be demonstrated in several key aspects of student learning programs and services, leadership, and governance. These include preparation for full authority of on-site administration, the development and approval of curriculum, and the process of planning and allocation. (Standards I.B, II.A, II.B, IV.A)

### **Campus Recommendation 2:**

The team recognizes that significant progress has occurred with Student Learning Outcomes. However, the team recommends that the efforts be accelerated to expand recurrent cycles of authentic assessment and campus-wide dialogue on results. (Standards I.B, II.A, II.B)

**See District Recommendations 1 and 2**



## **Standard II**

### **Student Learning Programs and Services**

#### **A. Instructional Programs**

##### **General Comments**

Over the last six years, an integration of planning processes in the development and updating of curriculum and instructional programs and services has grown. This process has been bolstered by access to student demographic, achievement, and accountability data made available to the campus from the district's Office of Institutional Effectiveness. There is commitment expressed across all levels of the institution to continue analyzing this data for student success and continuous improvement of instructional programs and services. Curriculum is offered in a variety of modalities using flexible scheduling in service to the surrounding community.

Student learning outcomes (SLOs) have been developed for a majority of courses and are tied to both a districtwide four-year program review and a campus-based annual cycle of program review and curriculum updates. The campus has begun to complete assessment of SLOs at the course level. General Education SLOs have been written for the district but do not exist specifically for Norco Campus and have only been assessed indirectly via a student survey. SLOs are not yet developed for programs, certificates, or degrees.

##### **Findings and Evidence**

Norco Campus identifies and meets the varied educational needs of its students by offering multiple programs and academic services that address the campus mission. Data sources and surveys used to determine student learning needs include: The Student Success Report, which is part of the District Fact Book; the Community College Student Effectiveness Survey (CCSEQ), and the Open Campus Online Course Student Survey, which measures the effectiveness of distance education courses. The rate of response to these surveys for Norco Campus results in a high level of confidence in the data. Program review is a central means for identifying students' learning needs and assessing progress toward achieving student learning outcomes. There is a districtwide four-year program review cycle with a campus-level annual update for each academic discipline, student service program, and administrative unit. The RCCD Office of Institutional Research provides relevant data for each discipline or unit. (Standard II.A.1.a)

Established curriculum procedures exist for RCCD to design, identify student learning outcomes for, approve, administer, and deliver courses. All district-approved curricula must meet state standards, including: appropriateness to mission, quality, demonstrable need, feasibility, and compliance with all laws and regulations. Evaluation of courses occurs regularly during the four-year program review cycle, which is used to manage updates of existing course outlines. Working with the districtwide Program Review and Assessment Committees, the districtwide Curriculum Committee assists disciplines in producing accurate and up-to-date course outlines of record. (Standards II.A.2.a-b)



The District Curriculum Committee (DCC) uses state and local resources as a basis for its procedures, relying on the California Community College *Program and Course Approval Handbook*, the Riverside Community College District *Curriculum Handbook*, the RCCD *Locally Developed Program Approval Process* for occupational programs, and the Curriculum Committee's Course Outline of Record Guide. The central role of faculty in establishing the quality and improvement of courses and programs is recognized by their participation in and their roles on the district and campus curriculum committees. Faculty expertise is relied on to create and update curriculum, and faculty members participate actively in vocational education advisory committees that meet annually and lead to recommendations for student competency levels needed to achieve success in the workforce. As Norco Campus progresses to greater independence, faculty and administration districtwide should resolve in policy, procedure, and practice the development and implementation of its curriculum approval process. This could necessitate a greater independence in the local campus curriculum approval body to ensure that the campus maintains the necessary flexibility to be responsive to the community while maintaining the high quality and rigor expected of higher education curriculum. (Standards II.A.2.a-b)

Norco uses a variety of delivery systems and instructional modalities to meet its curricular objectives and students' needs. In addition to traditional face-to-face classes offered at a variety of locations and times, Norco offers hybrid, teleweb, and online courses. Distance Education courses are developed through the same process as traditionally delivered courses. A Distance Education Addendum, detailing typical modalities used in traditional courses, must be completed and approved by the districtwide Curriculum Committee before a class is offered to students. Since distance education courses replicate approved traditional course outlines, the appropriate credit type, delivery mode, and location of courses follow the existing district and campus curriculum approval process as well as development of the term class schedule. (Standards II.A.2.a-d)

Distance Education learning policies concerning Intellectual Property Rights are detailed in the RCCD Collective Bargaining Agreement. Help Desk services are provided by the State Chancellor's Office (State Project 24/7), the RCCD Information Services Office, the Open Campus Office, the Faculty Innovation Center, and support services at RCCD offices. To ensure that faculty include virtual student support resource links in distance education courses for the library and counseling, Norco and the Open Campus Office should emphasize and incorporate the use of these links in the initial faculty training for distance education course delivery. (Standards II.A.2.c-f)

Norco Campus requires instructors to distribute a course syllabus to students. However, the campus does not have a mechanism to ensure syllabi and course materials are current by term. To ensure that faculty course syllabi are current and distributed to students each term, the administration should implement a procedure for faculty to submit updated course syllabi to the Office of Instruction each semester. At this time, classes are evaluated on how timely interactivity is occurring between students and faculty. However, the institution does not have a mechanism to ensure that distance education courses and programs provide timely and effective interaction between students and faculty and among students. (Standards II.A.2.c-f)



High-quality instruction with the depth, breadth, and rigor expected for a public community college is offered at Norco Campus through the RCCD. Synthesis of learning is assured through general education patterns required for transfer or degree curricula. Sequencing and timely completion are assured through appropriate scheduling patterns developed in Educational Services as a result of cooperation between scheduling and counseling. Students' unique needs and multiple learning styles are addressed through varied teaching methodologies. Media-based enhancements are found in all teaching modalities. Among these enhancements are discussion boards, synchronous chats, laboratory projects, standard and electronic portfolios, oral and dramatic presentations, and team teaching. Faculty members discuss student needs and learning styles at flex and professional development workshops, conferences, and formal and informal assessments. (Standards II.A.2.c-d)

Traditional 16-week semester courses are supplemented by 14-week late start courses along with 8-week "Fast Track" course scheduling. Using a Weekend College format, instruction offered on Friday evenings and all day Saturday and Sunday leads to associate degrees and occupational certificates. A Study Abroad Program provides opportunities for district students to experience a variety of countries outside of the U.S. for both full semester and short-term summer programs. Tutoring, learning communities, and a Title V Grant focused on increasing the use of technology among the faculty and developing curricular enhancements for at-risk students support all these course-scheduling formats. (Standards II.A.1.b-c, II.A.8)

Regular systematic evaluation of courses and programs occurs through the districtwide four-year program review cycle. Through this process, faculty members engage in an ongoing analysis of the relevance and appropriateness of their courses and programs. Achievement of student learning outcomes is planned for in program review through regular course updates that must also include student learning outcomes and a description of the manner in which the outcomes will be assessed. Currency and future needs and plans are addressed in the campus annual updates required by each discipline. (Standard II.A.2.e)

Student learning outcomes are identified through the course approval and update processes and are linked to planning through the program review process. The District Curriculum Committee (DCC) created a template for course outlines of record to incorporate student learning outcomes. To provide flexibility in modifying student learning outcomes that are included in the course outline of record, the DCC recognizes changes to student learning outcomes as minor if all of the faculty in a discipline agree to the proposed modification. As of the 2006-2007 academic year, 47 out of 50 instructional disciplines completed districtwide program review and established student learning outcomes for their courses through this process. (Standards II.A.1.c, II.A.2.a-c)

Student learning outcomes are in development but do not yet exist for the majority of programs, degrees, and certificates offered by the RCCD. Campus leadership intends to link the development and assessment of program, degree, and certificate student learning outcomes to the program review process. Norco Campus should accelerate its progress on the development, assessment, and evaluation of student learning outcomes at the degree and certificate levels. Measurable progress on all student learning outcomes assessment should include evidence that the assessment results are used to improve student learning and are reported to the public. (Standards II.A.2.h-i)



The District Assessment Committee (DAC) facilitates the assessment of student learning outcomes for the district and college/campuses. This committee has developed a rubric for measuring progress in assessment in which disciplines can be ranked 0 for no discussion of or activity in assessment to 5 for disciplines in which assessment is in place and data has been collected for multiple courses, and where the results are used to improve learning in at least one course. Norco Campus has used DAC's rubric as one of six factors in ranking departmental staffing requests for the 2007-2008 academic year. Thus far, 35 disciplines have completed some portion of assessment as described in their program reviews. Adjunct faculty participation in assessment is a challenge. Norco Campus could address this initial lack of participation by creating incentives for participation and/or including evidence of participation in adjunct faculty evaluation. Changes in curriculum, instructional methodology, course delivery mode, or student learning outcomes have occurred in about 20 disciplines. Classroom-based assessment projects at Norco Campus have occurred in English, humanities, English as a Second Language (ESL), mathematics, and the library. Results are made available to the public through a variety of means, including required reporting to the State Chancellor's Office and district publications, such as the RCCD Outcomes Assessment Update, which is posted on the campus website. (Standards II.A.1.c, II.A.2.e-f)

The district introduces students to a breadth of study by requiring a minimum of 23 units selected from the following areas of knowledge: the natural sciences, social and behavioral sciences, humanities, language and rationality, health education, and self-development. These courses offer a broad general introduction to the theories and methodologies of these disciplines. Life skills are incorporated into general education through requirements in reading, writing, oral communications, mathematics, critical thinking, and scientific/quantitative reasoning. These courses match the district's student learning outcomes, which include: critical thinking, information skills, communication skills, breadth of knowledge, application of knowledge, and global awareness. The RCCD Board of Trustees approved general education student learning outcomes in 2006. While the general education learning outcomes have been identified, the process to link these student learning outcomes to degrees and certificates needs to be completed and direct assessment methods created. To date, the only assessment that has been conducted on general education student learning outcomes is through an annual graduate survey. (Standards II.A.3.a-c)

Departmental course examinations are used in English as a Second Language (ESL) and Spanish. ESL uses a common final exam for the highest level of grammar and writing course; it has been administered for three semesters beginning in spring 2006 and assessment results are providing ongoing feedback to instructors each semester. A common final exam for Spanish I was developed by World Language Spanish instructors, and has been administered for three semesters beginning in spring 2005. Results have been used to improve student success. Both the ESL and Spanish faculty met to prepare their respective common final exams. Instructors in both disciplines have diverse backgrounds and have received training in the elimination of cultural bias in developing test questions. Licensing exams for the ~~nursing, cosmetology,~~ real estate, construction technology, and computer information science programs provide an external validation of learning. (Standard II.A.2.g)



Students completing an associate's degree must complete a minimum of 60 units that includes a minimum of 18 units in focused areas of study. Requirements for an associate's degree include ~~three units from a cultural breadth category~~ that includes ethnic studies, humanities, world religions, and international perspectives (Standard II.A.3.c). Associate in arts degrees are offered in either liberal Arts and Sciences or a general IGETC transfer focus. Norco Campus offers associate in science degree programs in over 20 areas of focused study (Standard II.A.4). Students who complete vocational and occupational certificates and degrees demonstrate technical and professional competencies through earned grades, articulation of courses with other institutions, employment statistics, and student satisfaction surveys. Only courses in which students earn a C grade or better are eligible to meet program completion requirements. Advisory committees offer input into the quality, currency, skills, and knowledge required for successful employment (Standard II.A.5).

Credits are awarded based on Title 5 requirements. All transfer courses have articulation agreements with both public and private universities. Non-transfer courses meet applicable criteria for credit toward associate's degrees and basic skills courses include critical thinking and meet state and local requirements. Achievement of student learning outcomes is measured through grades awarded, credit received, and rubrics published in instructors' course syllabi. (Standard II.A.2.h)

The transfer-of-credit policies are included in the districtwide catalog covering credit for advanced placement, credit by examination, credit for College-Level Examination Program (CLEP), and military service credit. Courses transferred from other community colleges are evaluated by Admissions and Records and/or by the appropriate discipline faculty members. A statement reflecting this credit evaluation practice would facilitate enrollment for prospective students. A process and policy for evaluating the learning outcomes for courses students transfer into from other institutions would strengthen both college/campus and district success in ensuring that students completing degrees have met RCCD student learning outcomes. Articulation agreements exist with the University of California and the California State University systems. Catalog statements encourage students to see a college counselor for assistance in determining transferability of courses to both public and private institutions (Standard II.A.6.a). Procedures for addressing the needs of students and faculty members in programs that are eliminated or substantially changed is described in the RCCD Program Discontinuance Policy, which exists in draft form. The policy has been approved by all three campus academic senates, and is currently on the chancellor's desk waiting to be placed on an upcoming Board of Trustees agenda (Standard II.A.6.b).

There are five primary ways in which Norco Campus ensures that it provides enrolled and prospective students, the public, and college personnel with clear and accurate information. These include a districtwide catalog and schedule of classes, district and campus websites, course syllabi, brochures, flyers, and summary reports. Documents are reviewed for accuracy and clarity at the appropriate level by an oversight individual and/or group and are reviewed when required due to both internal and external changes in policies and procedures (Standard II.A.6.c).

A statement concerning academic integrity of the teaching and learning process can be found in



the "Ethics Statement" in the Faculty Handbook, which includes references to ensuring that data and information are presented fairly and objectively (Standard II.A.7.a). Student academic honesty is established in district and campus policy and is published in the Student Handbook and on individual course syllabi. Board Regulation 6080 (Administrative Regulation 5020), Student Discipline and Due Process, covers all issues of student discipline including academic dishonesty (Standard II.A.7.b). As a public institution, the Norco Campus does not require conformity to specific codes of conduct nor does it seek to instill specific beliefs or worldviews (Standard II.A.7.c).

## **Conclusions**

Norco Campus has made some effective strides in its efforts to establish itself as a separate college. Recent innovations in class scheduling have led to more effective planning around student needs. Working collaboratively, the faculty, department chairs, and administration developed Success Track scheduling centered on a basic skills curriculum. Developmental courses in English and mathematics are offered in association with classes in general and vocational education and student development to create course packages with appealing titles including "Early Bird," "Late Risers," and "Night Owl" geared toward students' personal and work lives. This scheduling is based on student convenience and flexibility, with enrollment allowed in as few as one course section and facilitated for up to four sections.

Beginning fall 2007 and predicated on an online course student survey, the Open Campus Office implemented a course for new online students to assess their capability and enhance success while enrolled in online classes. Based on an interview with the Open Campus Dean, this new course, which students take prior to enrolling in their first full term online course, showed a slight increase in online course retention rates. The Open Campus Dean provided a survey sample and survey results from spring 2006. The one unit student course and survey are probably too new to apply to admissions and recruiting until the spring enrollment process. The campus does not have a mechanism in place that evaluates educational effectiveness of its electronically-delivered courses' student learning outcomes, student retention, and satisfaction that ensures comparability to traditionally-delivered courses. The campus uses methods similar to those found in traditional courses to ensure the integrity of student work.

Interviews with faculty members indicate that there is an understanding of and dedication to continuous quality improvement in the classroom as evidenced through the development and assessment of student learning outcomes at the course level. In addition, there is awareness that these achievements must be replicated at the program, degree, and certificate levels as well as institutionally through the GE student learning outcomes. Documentary evidence and interviews with faculty and administrators indicate an authentic commitment to developing and assessing student learning outcomes. The campus is clearly in a developmental phase in the area of student learning outcomes (according to the rubric distributed to the team). Districtwide frameworks, including the curriculum and program review processes and the District Assessment Committee, are in place to support these efforts and to ensure that the full engagement of faculty and staff in the process is ongoing and sustainable. Norco Campus has made efforts to incorporate the assessment of student learning outcomes into the allocation process via requests



for additional staffing. Strengthening the linkages between student learning improvement and allocation of resources will increase campus commitment to these processes.

The key question in the area of instructional services for Norco Campus involves the curriculum process. The district is committed to the concept of one district one curriculum. The goals of this philosophy come from the best of intentions for the district's students. Maintenance of a unified curriculum facilitates education from campus-to-campus within the district and allows articulation of this common curriculum to be developed districtwide rather than by an individual campus. However, the team is concerned that this policy impedes Norco's ability to be responsive to the curricular needs of current and future students. In order to function as an independent college and meet the needs of its students and the community, Norco should have more ownership of the curriculum process. The district and campus should delineate their roles, with more responsibility taken at the campus level for the policies, procedures, and practices involved in the curriculum approval process for courses offered at the Norco Campus.

### **Recommendations**

**See Campus Recommendations 1 and 2**

## **B. Student Support Services**

### **General Comments**

The Student Support Services Division at Norco Campus provides 18 comprehensive services designed to accommodate the educational, career, and personal development needs of a diverse student population. Student needs and assessment are identified through assessment results, research data, student surveys, and self-identification of student goals. Academic, career, and personal counseling services are available through student services. The college has four full-time and five part-time counselors. Student access needs are provided through the use of technology and online services integrated into the admissions and records, matriculation, orientation, and counseling processes.

The Student Support Services Division promotes institutional effectiveness by developing and implementing a program review process. The Student Services Program Review 2006-2007 was a collaborative effort consisting of all student services components for the purpose of establishing Student Services Outcomes (SLOs) and Service Area Outcomes (SAOs). This self-study was presented and approved by the Program Review Committee.

### **Findings and Evidence**

Program review has been a driving force and a primary focus for establishing goals and objectives in each student services program. SLOs, SAOs, program accomplishments, strengths, and areas of need are listed for each program. Programs participating in program review include Admission and Records, the Assessment Center, Athletics, the Career and Transfer Center, College Safety and Police, Counseling, Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSP&S), EOPS/CARE, Food Services, Health Services, Job Placement Services, the Office of the Dean,



Student Services, Outreach, Puente, Student Activities, Student Financial Services, TRIO Programs, and Tutorial Services. (Standard II.B.1)

Evidence of appropriate and accurate information is contained in the college catalog. Student Services programs are clearly defined as is information on administration and staff. (Standard II.B.2)

Student Services programs provide comprehensive and reliable services, including categorical programs, specially funded programs, and student services grants. Programs such as Puente, TRIO, STAR, and the Talented Tenth are exemplary programs designed to meet the educational needs of a diverse ethnic and socio-economic student population.

The Disabled Students Programs and Services (DSP&S) has developed SLOs in the following areas related to student understanding: 1. Accommodations for which they individually qualify; 2. Accommodations that can assist in compensating specific educational limitation(s); and procedures for accessing their accommodations and services. There seems to be a clear understanding of expected outcomes from this program.

The EOPS/CARE Program is in the developmental stages of identifying SLOs. The program needs to differentiate between program requirements and SLOs. The SAOs are clearly defined and less ambiguous.

The Job Placement Center provides comprehensive services, including "Jobbing," a local on-line employment system; however, further development of SLOs is recommended. Findings indicate a lack of staffing to accommodate the growing needs of students, as three campuses share one FTE director.

The Outreach Program provides a variety of services, including recruitment to feeder high schools and local community based organizations. Objectives of this program are clear; however, SLOs need further development and expected percentages should be included in the next stage of implementation.

Financial Aid Services indicate goals, strengths, accomplishments, and concerns; however, SLOs and SAOs are not indicated in the program review process.

The Title V Program offers a variety of basic skills enrichment programs and pedagogical strategies to ensure that at-risk students have early alert intervention. The goal to improve success rates in successive math courses has been achieved through alternative curricular pedagogy. SLOs in math and basic skills are being developed. Learning Communities have provided an opportunity for collaboration between faculty and counseling to address retention and persistence. (Standard II.B.3.a)

Student Activities coordinates services in collaboration with the Associated Students of Norco Campus and clubs in order to develop leadership skills through participation in student government and co-curricular programs. The SLOs are in the beginning stages of development and focus on leadership styles and the eligibility requirement for student leaders. SAOs are



clearly stated. Students told the team that they were not invited to participate on interview committees for the hiring of faculty, staff, or administrators. (Standard II.B.3.b)

The counseling area has identified a specific need for full time counselors to accommodate enrollment growth. The current ratio of counselors per student is 1:2,250. This ratio presents a problem for students who need follow-up counseling appointments, which assist in increasing student persistence and student success. The counseling staff is not sufficient to meet the needs of the growing student population. In order to increase student retention, it is recommended that counselors make Student Educational Plans (SEPs) a priority. SAOs in counseling address the need for providing intervention workshops for students on re-admit contracts. However, SLOs in counseling do not address what is expected of students to achieve and are not clear. It is recommended that counseling formulate data/surveys to address the need to strengthen the counseling component and create a more effective evaluation process. (Standard II.B.3.c)

The college evaluates assessment placement instruments to appropriately place students in classes suitable to their competency levels. Matriculation uses Accuplacer as its primary placement instrument; in addition, a proficiency ESL instrument is used to assess ESL students. (Standard II.B.3.e)

Files for students are confidential and secure. Hard copies are housed on-site in the Admissions Office. (Standard II.B.3.f)

Student Support Services programs engage in a variety of evaluative methods: annual internal program review, monthly division meetings with the dean, and data collected by the Office of Institutional Research and Reporting. SLOs and SAOs are in the developmental stages. The Student Services Division should create clear outcomes by providing SLOs and SAOs in the Student Handbook and program brochures for visibility and accessibility. SAOs can be useful to faculty if they are listed in the Faculty Handbook and can be used as a reference in identifying student support programs. The next step should be full implementation of their assessment. (Standard II.B.4)

## **Conclusions**

The overall quality of the Student Support Services Division is good. Several exemplary programs, such as Puente, the Talented Tenth, Title V Basic Skills Program, and the STAR Program, reflect the campus' sensitivity to the diversity of the student population. Providing comprehensive services and open access in all locations is a priority for the campus. The Student Services Division has begun the process of developing SLOs and SAOs. Programs and services are beginning to implement assessment measurements. The team suggests that appropriate staff development training be offered to assist the Student Support Services Division in implementing measurable outcomes in all programs.

## **Recommendations**

**See Campus Recommendations 1 and 2**



## **C. Library and Learning Support Services**

### **General Comments**

Norco library and learning support services are accessible in the Airey Library, the Writing and Reading Center (WRC), the Math and CIS laboratories, in selected classrooms (Supplemental Instruction), and via the internet through two district library websites. The library is overseen by a recently appointed Assistant Dean of Library Services. Instructional equipment is maintained by the Instructional Media Center (IMC); computers are maintained by Lab Services. The library collection is updated by campus librarians; cataloguing, acquisitions, and other processing are handled by the library at Riverside City College. A librarian is available in Norco's library during the hours of operation. The library collection is reflective of the breadth of the curriculum. An inter campus loan service among district libraries provides expanded access to resources. Norco has adopted information competency as a campus-wide outcome; instruction is available online as well as in library workshops.

### **Findings and Evidence**

The district continues to have a centralized library system. The Norco library holds over 26,000 volumes, 6,000 e-books (shared), and 53 electronic subscriptions. On three visits, the team noted that materials were well-organized, the 53 workstations were being used by 35 students, and a librarian and the Assistant Dean were on duty. The workstations are recent acquisitions, and there are outlets for six additional stations, should the demand for computers increase; currently, students have a two hour limit on continuous usage, an increase from one hour, based upon student surveys. The VP of Educational Services provided additional funds last year to begin to improve the collection (\$40,000 base, increased by \$20,000), and added additional funds to purchase a set of textbooks for student use in the library. The funding level is adequate for maintaining the collection but may need enhancement to establish a permanent collection baseline. (Standard II.C.1)

Through email exchanges and administrative program review, there is evidence of regular effort to engage faculty in reviewing and improving the quality of the Norco collection; some disciplines take greater advantage of the opportunity to purchase books for the collection. The Assistant Dean cites as a goal the development of a formal library/IMC plan for Norco Campus; he also suggests the need for an informational brochure, but this has yet to be completed. Library program review identified the need for consistent, widespread faculty support for both culling the current collection and recommending new volumes. (Standard II.C.1.a)

The Norco library offers students regularly scheduled library skills workshops, which include orientation to the Norco library; book search tools, and electronic resources. About 800 students took this workshop during the last academic year. Students take a one-minute assessment at the end of the workshop. A Library 1 (information competency) course offered online through Riverside City College. Neither the workshop nor the course is mandatory for graduation, so the General Education SLO relevant to the library -- information skills -- is not consistently assessed through Library Services. The campus needs to consider how the general SLO for information skills will be assessed. (Standard II.C.1.b)



Each of the campus' labs operates in support of the disciplines. Each lab is staffed by rotating part time and full time faculty and student aides. Labs are equipped with up to date hardware, and are supported by Lab Services, located in the lab space. Labs provide individual and small group tutorials, tied to classes in the discipline. Students are offered an introduction (log-in, access, etc.) to lab functions. The Writing and Reading Center offers required supplemental instruction in English matriculation courses, ESL 54 and 55, and Reading 83. The math lab supports all math courses; the CIS Lab supports all CIS courses and a variable unit lab practicum. Hours of operation are approximately the same as the library's.

The tutorial program is committed to offering tutoring in basic skills and academic subjects. The Tutorial Center, situated in the library, is currently staffed by a full time clerk, who assigns tutors recommended by instructors in the various content areas; some services are directly connected to courses. The clerk recruits tutors from instructor recommendations and provides weekly tutor training. The tutors seem dedicated to the retention and persistence of students. Increasingly, online access has been expanded by the disciplines, partially explaining some reduced lab usage; for example, Math 52 is now offered online, whereas before it was offered in the lab alone. Tutoring space is an issue in the growth of tutorial services. In interviews with the team, tutors said that only two small study rooms in the library were available to accommodate group tutoring sessions. Evidence from the Student Services Program Review and an interview with the tutoring coordinator indicated that, due to budget constraints, there is no staff to assist her in completing SLOs for tutoring programs. (Standard II.C.1.c)

The IMC, which previously was a district service center, operates during the hours classes are offered, seven days a week, and provides equipment, such as projectors and display systems, video/audio and PowerPoint production services, daily classroom support, video conferencing, and equipment maintenance. Library program review identified a desire for full staffing and more space. Workload increased from 2000 service calls in 2005 to 3000 in 2006. Although the IMC uses library space and is supervised by the Library Dean, it is not clearly connected to library functions. Recent feedback from faculty shows some dissatisfaction with services. The current vacancy in full time staff is in the priority queue for funding in the next budget cycle. (Standard II.C.1.c)

The Norco library has appropriate operating hours, seven days a week; a librarian, clerical staff, and student aides are available during operating hours. There are few examples of security issues; the two that were noted were promptly handled by college police. Off-campus access via the digital library extends access to library services. The library is used by John F. Kennedy High School, which does not have its own library and does not provide resources to support the Norco library. A written agreement between the school district and Norco library would be advisable. (Standard II.C.1.c, d)

The library's online resources continue to be supported through the District Digital Library (LAMP), and electronic subscriptions are administered through a single subscription. Books and other material may be borrowed from other campuses through inter-campus library loan. Library program review identified the need to resolve the district/college relationship, especially with respect to online subscriptions and inter-campus delivery; for example, while online database



usage has more than doubled from 2004-2006, LAMP has not yet disaggregated usage by campus, so it is difficult for the Norco library to assess usage. (Standard II.C.1.e)

Tutorial services usage is well documented, disaggregated by general tutorial and support for categorical programs. The WRC, Math Lab, and CIS Lab are widely used, documented through electronic log-in. Several studies provide evidence that students who use the tutorial services have, in the aggregate, higher end-of-course grades. Studies conducted with the assistance of the Title V assessment coordinator validate the value-added gains resulting from supplemental instruction, including outcome studies (success, retention, persistence, and grades) derived from regular use of the Tutorial Center, WRC lab, and math intervention program. (Standard II.C.2)

There has been discussion about a change in leadership of the labs; there is administrative interest in consolidating the labs into a student success center with oversight by a new assistant dean. (Standard II.C.2)

### **Conclusions**

Faculty responsible for the library and the learning support labs are knowledgeable about the institution's instructional program and activities and support them appropriately. Resources are available in a variety of delivery systems. Data show increased usage and general user satisfaction. While information competency skills are provided by the library and other labs, no one has been designated to assess student achievement of the information skills GE/SLO.

Norco Campus can be commended for its use of instructional funds to offer current textbooks as reference materials and make them accessible to students in the library.

Tutorial services (Tutorial Center, Writing and Reading Center, Math Lab, CIS Lab) are up to date, informed by faculty, and widely accessible through a variety of delivery systems. Studies using student outcome data, initiated by lab faculty and tutorial services staff and supported by the Title V assessment coordinator, have demonstrated the value-added benefits of supplemental instruction. Changes in usage are monitored and services are adjusted to meet needs.

Based on student surveys, library services appear adequate; however, library staff have identified several areas of need. The team affirms the campus' plan to develop a formal library/IMC plan for Norco Campus, to include student/community outreach strategies, adequacy of staffing, involvement of all disciplines in reviewing and recommending collection improvement, and responsibility for assessment of the information skills GE/SLO.

### **Recommendations**

**None**



## **Standard III Resources**

### **A. Human Resources**

#### **General Comments**

Norco Campus provided extensive information regarding its human resources processes. This includes policies, procedures, job descriptions, minimum qualifications, recruiting, application, and interview processes, training, and other areas. Generally, these areas are well defined and systematically addressed.

#### **Findings and Evidence**

Job descriptions and evaluation processes are sufficient to support student learning. Many of these have been updated to reflect updated methodologies and improved descriptiveness of duties within specific areas. (Standard III.A.1.a, b)

Evaluation procedures are in place for all employees of the district. Contracted faculty on tenure-track status are evaluated with significant tenured faculty participation. Given the large number of adjunct faculty, department chairs “deputize” other full-time faculty to observe and evaluate part-time instructors in their departments. Classified staff are evaluated on a formalized schedule. Administrative evaluations are conducted on a three-year cycle for long term employees and a separate one for new administrative employees. (Standard III.A.1.b)

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) are becoming an important part of the duties of faculty at the Norco Campus. SLOs are not currently in faculty job descriptions but there is serious discussion regarding the inclusion of SLOs in the evaluation process. There is overwhelming evidence of activities for the implementation of SLOs, with 1,757 course outlines of record across the district that include SLOs. (III.A.1.c)

Ethics policies exist within the district. These include written policies for the Board of Trustees and the Academic Senate. Drafts of policies covering the rest of the staffing areas, including administration and classified staff, are in draft form and being developed with the expectation of being implemented in the near future. (Standard III.A.1.d)

The funding of positions is an important part of the human resource planning process. There is no funding model or formula in place that can be validated as adequately funding the staffing needs of Norco Campus as a college. Funding is currently allocated for these needs by the district office, and Norco does not have the ability to fund its own human resource planning needs. There is discussion regarding the near future implementation of a Budget Allocation Model (BAM), but the parameters cannot be determined at this time. (Standard III.A.2, 6)

The gap between the demographics of the student population and that of full-time faculty is especially significant in the lack of full-time Hispanic faculty. This is not a new problem, as it was raised as a recommendation during the 2001 site visit, referencing Standard 7.D.2, regarding the achievement of



employment equity objectives. The district has recently implemented three programs to address this issue -- the development/reimplementation of a faculty internship program, active recruitment through numerous diversity publication/journals/websites, and the development of an adjunct pool with a diverse constituency. It is understood that diversification of full-time faculty is dependent upon the turnover rate of current full time faculty and all strategies regarding this area will be long term. The initiatives to implement these processes are well planned, but they must be maintained and sustained to make progress in this area. (Standard III.A.4.b)

Several training programs are in place at the district. This includes EEO training for selection committees as well as numerous flex activities for faculty with over 50 types of workshops offered to faculty annually. The online 4faculty.org program and face-to-face training assist faculty in the development of syllabi. A faculty development coordinator on .2 released time at Norco and a district office representative are engaged in regular faculty training. The Norco coordinator is setting up an online message board to provide information on basic skills instruction to adjunct faculty. Orientation sessions are held for new faculty. One contractual and one optional day of flex activities were offered in fall 2007. Training activities are provided for classified staff. The Diversity and Human Resources Office trains faculty and staff in the prevention of sexual harassment, with up-to-date training for supervisors as mandated by the state. (Standard III.A.5)

## **Conclusions**

The self study report identifies revision/adoption of numerous policies and procedures for more training and instruction in the hiring process. This revision, if implemented, would standardize the hiring process for continuity.

Norco Campus has clearly defined processes to define its prioritization for staffing needs. It does not currently have the ability to fulfill these staffing needs, as the district is the 'decider' of prioritization requests for all areas. When the Budget Allocation Model (BAM) is completed, there is some promise that this ability will be met, but at this time the fulfillment of staffing needs does not reside with Norco.

There is a clear unity of purpose among faculty and staff in the desire to support student success. There is a connectedness among the faculty and staff with a unity of purpose. A strong desire to provide the best learning environment for students is evident in numerous facets of the Norco Campus community.

## **Recommendations**

### **Campus Recommendation 3:**

The team recommends that strategic planning include the total cost of ownership for allocations such as staffing, professional development, technology, and planning for all new facilities and capital projects, including long range planning. (Standards III.A.2, 6; III.B.2.a; III.C.1.b, d; III.C.2; III.D.1.a-d, 3)

### **District Recommendation 4:**



As recommended by the 2001 accreditation visiting team, the teams recommend that the district more clearly specify the existing personnel selection procedures and develop procedures for the selection of educational administrators, including the position of the chancellor. These selection processes must include input from the various college/campuses constituent groups. (Standards III.A.1, 3; IV.A.2)

## **B: Physical Resources**

### **General Comments**

According to the space inventory filed with the State Chancellor's office in 2007, the existing Norco Campus sits on 141 acres, comprised of 15 permanent buildings and 11 modular buildings, providing a total of 94,230 assignable square feet and 141,342 gross square feet of building space. The initial facilities were constructed in 1991, with the completion of the early childhood education center in 2004. One modular building was added in 2002, three additional modular buildings were placed in 2005 and seven modular buildings installed in 2007.

The campus has participated in the development and implementation of a new strategic planning process. Moreover, it has recently developed a draft Norco Education and Facilities Master plan using the new strategic planning process. The district is in the process of implementing a \$350 million facilities bond, Measure C. The bond measure and state funding are providing the campus with new capital construction building projects.

The district has the primary responsibility for oversight and coordination of the planning of all major capital outlay projects. The respective campus staff works with the architects in the development of new construction and scheduled maintenance projects, with district oversight.

The Norco Campus Director of Plant Operations and Maintenance oversees the maintenance and operations of Norco Campus facilities. The maintenance and operations staff provides services seven days a week, and despite the limited plant services staff, they do an outstanding job of maintaining the facilities. Parking lot signage and maintenance are controlled by the district office.

Law enforcement and security services are provided to the campus by a centralized district police department. A police substation is located on Norco Campus. Safety inspections and scheduled maintenance projects are developed at the campus level.

### **Findings and Evidence**

Norco Campus has successfully continued to develop the campus facilities to assure adequate physical resources are available to support programs and services. Norco's Five-Year Construction plan outlines two major capital construction projects for the campus, for which funding has successfully been acquired and allocated. The industrial technology project in phase III provides the college with approximately 32,000 additional assignable square feet. The working drawings are approved and the project is currently in the bidding process. In addition, working drawings for an additional student center building are currently under development,



adding approximately 15,000 assignable square feet of building space. All existing buildings and new capital projects plans are approved by Division of the State Architect (DSA); the modular buildings on campus are also DSA approved buildings. (Standard III.B.1.a)

The on-site Director of Plant Operations and Maintenance oversees the Norco maintenance and operations staff. The Director of Plant Operations and Maintenance position is a recent title change. Formerly, the facilities manager reported to the district office. With the hiring of the new Vice President of Business Services, the Director of Plant Operations and Maintenance reports to the new Vice President of Business Services. Routine maintenance and operations services are provided by on-site plant services staff, with the exception of the services that the campus contracts out. The plant services staff consists of one maintenance mechanic, a maintenance helper, three grounds workers, and five night custodians. (Standard III.B.1.b)

In previous years Norco Campus has provided input on the district's Five-Year Scheduled Maintenance plan. The plan is used to seek scheduled maintenance funding from the State Chancellor's Office. This year the Campus developed the plan and submitted it to the district for submittal to the state. (Standard III.B.1.b)

The existing buildings are substantially in compliance with the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) code, with the exception of two areas identified by a district wide ADA compliance survey -- the handicap parking spaces south of the existing student center building and various elevator exterior call bottom heights. The scope of work included in the industrial technology building, when completed, will bring the handicap parking into ADA compliance. The district is working with the campus to develop a district wide ADA project that will bring elevators into compliance. (Standard III.B.1.b)

Monthly safety inspections have been performed by a team of plant services staff comprised of one person from each of the three campuses. The information from safety inspections is submitted through the campus' online work order system for each campus to correct. In January 2007, the process was changed, and now monthly safety inspections are performed by the onsite maintenance and operations staff of each respective campus. The campus is planning to start a safety committee. (Standard III.B.1.b)

In spring 2007, a district maintenance and operations taskforce was established with three charges: develop standards of care, review job descriptions, and establish training and development expectations. The taskforce is a joint effort among the Vice Presidents of Business Services, Directors of Plant Operations and Maintenance, and the district Associate Vice Chancellor, Facilities, Design, and Construction. Through the taskforce structure, Norco Campus is developing a standard of care model for campus maintenance and operations. This standard of care will assist the campus in maintaining the facilities and developing a staffing plan, which will help Norco identify current and future maintenance and operations staffing needs prior to new buildings coming online. (Standard III.B.1.b)

Law enforcement and security services are provided to the college by a centralized district police department. The district's chief of police has regularly scheduled office hours at the campus. A police substation is located on Norco Campus and onsite supervision is provided by a senior



police officer. Police and security staffing services are provided seven days a week. Reciprocal agreements in place allow local law enforcement agencies to provide the district officers with ~~back-up assistance~~ as needed, enhancing campus safety. The department has submitted a proposal to upgrade the existing radio systems, which will allow direct communications with Riverside County Sheriff dispatchers. (Standard III.B.1.b)

Campus emergency preparedness SIMS/NIMS training has been provided and manuals are currently being updated by the campus police department. The Director of Plant Operations is in the process of establishing on-site emergency preparedness supplies. (Standard III.B.1.b)

The new strategic planning process assists in the formal identification of future operational costs and relative staffing for new construction projects coming online. However, there is no formal planning document to assist the campus in identifying all of the operational and equipment replacement. Providing a total cost of ownership plan will assist Norco in identifying and anticipating such operational costs as staffing, utility, and systematic equipment replacement for new buildings. The campus is in the beginning stages of developing a midterm report to identify the total cost of ownership of its new facilities. (Standard III.B.2.a)

The district has developed numerous planning committees at the campus level that link planning to resources: Norco Campus Academic, Student Services and Administrative Planning Councils, Norco Campus Strategic Planning Committee, and nine Norco Campus Strategic Planning Subcommittees, one that includes physical resources. The facility needs identified from program review and these committees provide the framework for integration into the new draft Norco Educational and Facilities Master Plan, which drives the district's Five-Year Construction Plan. (Standard III.B.2.b)

## **Conclusions**

The team believes that Standard III.B is met at a level appropriate for an independent college. The campus has the commencement authority, with the responsibility of a college, to maintain the facilities. The campus is effectively planning and constructing facilities to meet the needs of programs and services. In addition, the institution is maintaining physical resources in a safe and accessible condition.

The campus is to be commended for formalizing a new integrated strategic planning process, effectively making the plan known, and incorporating physical resources in the program review planning process. In addition, the campus is to be commended for its success in obtaining state and local funding for capital construction projects and the maintenance of its existing facilities.

## **Recommendations**

**See Campus Recommendation 3**

## **C Technology Resources**

### **General Comments**



The institution provides technology support to meet the needs of learning, teaching, campus-wide communications, research, and basic operational systems. Technology services, professional support, facilities, hardware, and software enhance the operation and effectiveness of the institution via campus and district level services. The institution provides training in the effective application of its information technology to students and personnel. Norco utilizes a structured approach for planning, acquiring, maintaining, and upgrading/replacing equipment. The campus is fortunate to have a new technology infrastructure because of its new facilities. Distribution and utilization of technology is an open and inclusive process for all segments of the institution. Technology planning appears to be integrated with institutional planning, beginning at the discipline/unit level, to the campus executive level, and on to district administrative levels. The campus integration process allows for systematically assessing the effective use of technology and using the results as the basis for improvement and future allocation of resources.

### **Findings and Evidence**

Each discipline/unit identifies its respective technology needs. Department chairs forward requests to the Norco Academic Planning Council, which are then forwarded to the Norco Strategic Planning Co-Chairs, followed by the Norco Strategic Planning Committee. During this process, the equipment is ranked by established criteria and prioritized on score sheets, reviewed, and revised. Evidence is verified via minutes of meetings; a flowchart detailing the ranking process, criteria sheets for ranking, open hearings conducted so all campus segments can make comments, and the approved prioritized lists for 2007-2008 forwarded to the campus president for action. (Standard III.C.1)

In a needs assessment, 64 percent of faculty, staff, and administrators indicated that the campus provided adequate technology. Norco provides a full time Instructional Support Specialist to assist with software and technology services. The campus' curricular commitments for distance learning programs and courses are provided by the district office via Open Campus. The Associate Vice Chancellor of Information Services confirmed that the district and campus have provisions for reliability, disaster recover, privacy, and security, consisting of firewalls, intrusion detection, redundancy, etc. Data backups are stored off site and fail over capabilities established. (Standard III.C.1)

Information technology training is provided through Open Campus. New distance education students take a 1-unit training course to assess their readiness for distance education and learn about instructional technology and procedures. As a result of taking this class, fewer students dropped distance education classes. Faculty receive training through online tutorials and at the Faculty Innovation Center on the Riverside City College campus. The center provides ongoing technology training covering application software, Datatel, SARS, etc. In order to teach distance education courses, Norco faculty must complete a district-level course, which includes a component of basic pedagogy for distance education. Some instructors felt that those who already possess this knowledge should be offered an alternative to this component of the training. To determine the effectiveness of training, surveys are conducted upon course completion. Results are shared only with management (not faculty groups) via district meetings. The need for information technology training is assessed through administrative program review



of Open Campus Distance Education. (Standard III.C.1.b)

The management, maintenance, and operation of the institution's technological infrastructure and equipment are conducted on a district level with certain campus units/departments operating in concert to deliver service to the campus community. The district provides appropriate system reliability and emergency backup, but evidence is needed to verify process and procedures. Norco Campus has uninterrupted power supplies (UPS) on all servers to ensure system reliability and minimize data loss. UPS's and edge devices are in every technology closet with alarms. (Standard III.C.1.c)

Decisions about the use and distribution of technology resources are multi-layered. Allocation of technology resources is made by administrative decision based on input from faculty, campus IT personnel, and data from users, and as needed, subject to funding. The Technology Resources Subcommittee of the Norco Strategic Planning Committee uses information from program review and departmental budget requests to prioritize the purchase of equipment. The district is responsible for the institution's robust and secure technical infrastructure. The district established a Technology Standards Plan, which it feels is more important than a Technology Master Plan. However, Norco is creating its own Technology Strategic Plan because it feels a need to identify policies and procedures to keep its infrastructure reasonably up-to-date and ensure that equipment may be used to maximum life. On a district level, Open Campus gives sufficient consideration to equipment selected for distance education programs. (Standard III.C.1.d)

The district adopted physical technology infrastructure specifications for all new buildings. There is a base technology standard that the campus must meet and maintain. Campus technology planning is integrated with institutional needs and plans for improvement. The institution bases its technology decisions on the results of evaluation of program and service needs. However, the team could not find evidence that shows the integration of institutional needs and plans through the district resource allocation process. To ensure that the campus can assess how effectively technology is distributed, the district and the campus should design and implement an evaluation policy and a method of communicating the results. (Standard III.C.2)

## **Conclusions**

The overall general quality of Norco Campus in regard to Standard III.C is good. Norco is fully engaged with supporting student learning and services to improve institutional effectiveness. Norco follows a very clear budget allocation process, with criteria for the educational, support services, and administrative segments of the institution. Campus technology planning is integrated and resources appropriately distributed via a systematic process that allows for input from all institutional segments. The campus planning process allows for systematic assessment of the effective use of technology. However, at the district level the budget allocation process is unclear and does not appear to follow an integrated strategic planning process.

## **Recommendations**

**See Campus Recommendation 3**



## **D. Financial Resources**

### **General Comments**

The self study provided a great deal of evidence to address and substantiate the institution's assertions that it fully meets the standards. Evidence included district level audits and budgets and campus level organization charts, committee agendas, and meeting minutes.

Norco Campus is to be commended for its well documented and inclusive process for identifying and prioritizing resource requirements.

The primary fiscal issue facing the institution is the uncertainty concerning the Budget Allocation Model (BAM) that is being developed to be implemented for the 2007/2008 fiscal year, and the processes that will be used to implement that model. Whether there will be adequate resources to support the institution's strategic plan and accreditation as a college and whether the institution will be viably involved in future resource allocation decisions are critically important outstanding questions.

Another major issue related to Standard III.D but not specifically addressed is the level of authority granted by the governing board to the college presidents to participate in the allocation of resources and to manage their respective budgets. Currently there is no evidence that the Norco Campus president has the level of budget authority that would be expected.

### **Findings and Evidence**

Campus financial planning appears to be integrated with and supports all institutional planning. It is not clear that planning reflects realistic assessment of financial resource availability, development of financial resources, partnerships, and expenditure requirements because of the uncertainty of the BAM that is being developed. Additionally, there is no evidence of significant partnerships except with the middle college high school for the use of its facilities. There is no evidence that when making short-range financial plans, the campus formally considers its long-range financial priorities to assure financial stability. The district clearly identifies and plans for payment of liabilities and future obligations; however, the district has not yet completed an actuarial study to determine its GASB 45 retiree benefits liability nor has it set aside resources to fund what will almost certainly be a significant liability. (Standards III.D.1.a-c, 2.c)

The campus clearly defines the guidelines and processes for financial planning and budget development, and the site visit verified that the campus is following those guidelines and processes. The site visit also confirmed that all Norco constituencies have appropriate opportunities to participate in the development of campus institutional plans and budgets. At the district level there are not clearly understood guidelines and processes for financial planning and budget development concerning the allocation of resources to the campus level. The guidelines and processes for financial planning and resources distribution will be changing after a new Budget Allocation Model is developed and implemented.



The district financial documents, including the budget and independent audit, reflect appropriate allocation and use of financial resources to support student learning programs and services. The district's responses to external audit findings are comprehensive, timely, and communicated appropriately. The campus does not produce financial reports or separately respond to external audit reports. Appropriate financial information is provided throughout the institution and department chairs and managers can access real time budget and expenditure data and related information. (Standards III.D.2.a, b)

There is evidence that the district has sufficient cash flow and reserves to maintain stability, that insurance coverages are adequate, and that there are strategies for appropriate risk management. There appear to be realistic *district* level plans to meet financial emergencies and unforeseen occurrences; however, there is no evidence that there are or will be adequate *campus* level plans or resources to address financial emergencies and unforeseen occurrences. (Standard III.D.2.c)

There is evidence that the district practices effective oversight of finances; in fact, it is one of the few districts in California to have an internal auditor, although that position is currently unfilled. Financial resources, including those from auxiliary activities, fund-raising, and grants appear to be used with integrity in a manner consistent with the mission and goals of the district; board policies are in place and there are both internal and independent audits. However, the campus has virtually no role in the day-to-day oversight of the use of financial resources. Norco's contracts are all processed by a district contracts office, and there is evidence that contractual agreements with external entities contain appropriate provisions to maintain the integrity of the district and the campus; however, the Memorandum of Understanding with the Norco Unified School District does not address operational issues, such as the supervision of evening classes or the high school's access to campus facilities and services. (Standards III.D.2.d-f)

Norco has processes in place to regularly evaluate financial management processes, and the results of the evaluations are used to improve financial management systems within the campus. Districtwide, the two campuses and college are participating in a process to assess the allocation and use of resources and the development of a new Budget Allocation Model to allocate resources. Meeting minutes indicate that the process is progressing with active participation by Norco representatives. To ensure that Norco can manage and control the allocations it would receive as a college, the team recommends that Norco consider allocating resources to retain and train campus-specific accounting and fiscal staff. (Standards III.D.2.g, 3)

## **Conclusions**

Norco as a college would not meet Standard III.D. Financially, Norco currently has adequate funds to support student learning programs and services and to support institutional effectiveness. There is evidence that Norco relies upon its mission and goals as the foundation for financial planning. There is, however, a question as to what level of funding will be provided to Norco beginning in 2007/2008 by the new Budget Allocation Model (BAM) that is in development. There is no evidence that the new BAM will provide adequate resources or that the resources will be allocated in such a way that Norco's governance processes will be able to internally allocate those resources in support of its mission and goals. Furthermore, since an actuarial study or funding plan to address the GASB retiree benefit liability has not been



completed, there is no evidence that the potential funding of that liability will not adversely affect Norco.

To assure the financial integrity of the institution and responsible use of financial resources, Norco relies almost totally on the financial management and control systems of the district. There is evidence that the district's financial management control systems are currently effective, but there is no evidence that Norco has the internal resources and systems to manage and control allocations, especially categorical allocations, that would come more directly to Norco if it were to become a college.

### **Recommendations**

**See Campus Recommendation 3, District Recommendations 1 and 2**



## **Standard IV Leadership and Governance**

### **A. Decision-Making Roles and Processes**

#### **General Comments**

The campus rightly prides itself on broad participation and the extent to which Norco faculty and staff members swiftly address planning and program review initiatives. The campus sees itself as a cohesive institution serving students well and striving for the resources and independence to serve students better. The campus self study represents the new system of program review, planning, and resource allocation as one in which ideas can emerge at the discipline, service, program, or sector level and effectively compete for inclusion in campus priorities and district-level strategic planning and resource allocations. The self study alludes to extensive assessment and planning participation and communication networks, which are characterized by good relations and shared values and goals.

#### **Findings and Evidence**

Evidence (such as minutes, conversations on campus, and planning documents) supports the assertion that ideas move from responses to program reviews and planning to proposals at the site level. Further, there is solid evidence that Norco is a strongly cohesive campus community, whose members share goals that bind them together. Such cohesion fosters collaboration on program review, learning outcomes efforts, assessment, planning, and implementation of new initiatives at the campus. Discussion is extensive, generally substantial, and involves all constituencies. (Standard IV.A.1)

In spite of such buy-in and cohesion, a careful reading of NSPC minutes reveals that some projects slipped off the table at the district level in the recent past, only to reappear later -- without communication back to the local level SPC when disappearing or reappearing (for example, the Student Services Building proposal as it appears in NSPC minutes during 2006).

Norco faculty and staff have become acculturated to a complex and sometimes cumbersome decision-making matrix, yet they strongly support site-level program review and SLO processes and utilize them to make improvements in programs and services. At the same time, it is also evident from reviewing NSPC and district-level SPC minutes that decisions at the final stage of prioritization have not always been transparent. It remains to be seen if pending changes in the district/campus allocation model will improve this situation, but it certainly has the potential to make major contributions to resolving team concerns about campus independence and communications between the campus and the district. (Standard IV.A.2)

Participation appears to be broad and meaningful. Additionally, Norco faculty and administrative representatives are present on district bodies, occupying many of the leadership roles in recent years. Surveys of faculty and staff support the vision of "contributions drawn from all sectors of the college." Appropriate mechanisms for participation exist on site, and faculty and staff appear to understand the ways they can seek to contribute. (Standard IV.A. 3)



While the self study represents the campus as an independent institution, in planning, budgeting, and curriculum development there is little compelling evidence that site-level priorities have driven predictable decisions and allocations at the district level, although suggestions for changes regarding construction planning and block-grant site allocation are evident in recent discussions about the Budget Allocation Model. Moreover, while curriculum development mechanisms have been functional for the existing single-college structure, little has been done to establish a pathway toward three independent colleges. The team suspects that the current model will not serve students or faculty well in the near future and is concerned that failure to address this issue seriously impedes the emergence of Norco as an independent college. Across the district, faculty will need to determine whether site faculty can be entrusted with greater curricular autonomy while still ensuring full articulation internally and externally. (Standard IV.A.5)

### **Conclusions**

The campus partly meets Standard IV.A, but until actual site autonomy is realistically secured in curriculum development and delivery, planning, and resource allocation processes, the standard truly cannot be represented as fully met.

Norco Campus is to be commended for its collegial atmosphere and the good relations that exist among individuals and groups. Of particular note are the extent to which faculty, administration, and staff have joined in their support of the campus planning and prioritization processes, site-level program review, and SLO processes, and their utilization of those processes to improve programs and services.

### **Recommendations**

#### **District Recommendation 3:**

The teams recommend that college, campus, and district administrators and faculty delineate, document, and assess:

- The roles and responsibilities between and among the district's entities; (Standard IV.B.3; Policy and Procedures for the Evaluation of Institutions in Multi-College/Multi-Unit Districts or Systems)
- The roles and scope of authority of the CEOs at the district and college/campus levels; (Standard IV.A.2)
- A feedback loop between and among the entities on key issues, such as planning, staffing priorities, etc. (Standards IV.A.2; IV.B.3, 4, 6).

**See Campus Recommendation 1 and District Recommendation 4**

## **B. Board and Administrative Organization**

### **General Comments**



The RCCD Board of Trustees has established policies defining its composition, mandate, and code of ethics. Board composition, policies, and calendars are posted on the district website. The board approves all district educational programs; reviews and approves the budget and expenditures; and relies on district administrators, three college/campus presidents, and their administrations to ensure that practices reflect board policies and the mission statements of each institution.

The president takes an active role in ensuring quality instruction, establishing collegiality, setting values, and communicating priorities to all constituencies. She holds meetings to gather budget needs and requests input on final recommendations that she prepares for “the district budget bunch” that coordinates at the district level the allocation of district funding. The president is well known throughout the community, maintains contact with local and business leaders, and serves on various community boards.

The district developed functions maps in fall 2006, delineating district and college responsibilities. The district provides a range of direct services to Norco Campus, including business and human resources service, Open Campus, purchasing and payroll, warehousing, and information services. Shared functions include admissions, computing services, facilities support, library services, and student services programs. Evidence of effectiveness is “the growing campuses.” The district Curriculum Committee ensures that the board policy of “one curriculum, one student contract” is maintained.

The self study suggests that the current allocation model, based on district decision making, may be constrained in terms of balance and sufficiency; however, there is no evidence one way or the other whether the budgets are fairly distributed to Norco, and/or that they are adequate. The self study references the Three Colleges Project and a new budget allocation model for 2008-09.

### **Findings and Evidence**

Board policies were revised in May 2007 and are available to the public on the district website. A sample of board agendas and minutes from meetings and retreats shows evidence of the approval process for programs, budgets, and expenditures. A program for board development and new member orientation was not in evidence. Although the board recently created a policy on self-evaluation (BP 2745), there was no evidence that self evaluation has been implemented. The curriculum process agreement, last revised in June 1994, may require revisiting in order to ensure currency. Board minutes show evidence of board engagement in accreditation through board policy revision. (Standard IV.B.1)

The Norco Campus president has actively developed a variety of participatory planning groups to ensure that all stakeholders have access through the Strategic Planning Council. The campus budget development process, which is new, provides a rubric-based prioritization process for both equipment/supplies requests and faculty/staff requests. The process flows from administrative unit and instructional program reviews, through department faculty and planning councils, to the Strategic Planning co-chairs group, to the Norco Strategic Planning Council (open hearings), which forwards recommendations to the president. This is a new process, and it remains to be seen how the president’s recommendations are resolved when they are considered along with other campus/district priorities.



This process links program quality and institutional effectiveness indicators to human resources and facilities allocations. What is not yet known is the mechanism for campus-based allocations by the district; for example, will it be based on headcount, FTES, or other factors? (Standard IV.B.2)

The functions maps document the dispersion of roles between the district and the college/campuses. The vast majority of the functions remain at the district; for example, almost 75% of the bulleted functions in Function #1 remain the responsibility of the district (119 vs. 44). The board of trustees approves and adopts the total district revenues and expenditures, but the budget allocation model has not yet been approved by the board. (Standards IV.B.3.a, c)

There is no evidence that the district's service support for the colleges has been evaluated by Norco Campus to ensure efficiency, effectiveness, and/or adequacy. (Standards IV.B.3.b-d)

## **Conclusions**

Board policies have been revised to conform to accreditation standards. Some policies, such as self-evaluation of board members, have not yet been implemented.

Personnel uniformly appreciate the president's collaborative leadership style. Faculty and staff who were interviewed praised the current college budget development model as transparent, representative, and aligned to program review and institutional effectiveness. However, faculty were not clear about how their campus recommendations would be considered when aggregated at the district. It is not clear that the emergent campus budget development process and strategic planning are consistent with the planning and budget process at the other sites, nor that the district budget allocation model will be implemented in a manner consistent with expectations at the campus.

The functions maps do not suggest transition of functional responsibility from a district with one college and two campuses to a district with three colleges. There is no clear identification of distributed roles and responsibilities for campuses, college, and district, for example, in the new Budget Allocation Model. Similarly, there is no evidence that the Chancellor delegates to the Norco president sufficient authority and responsibility to carry out the strategic planning initiatives of the district, college, and campuses. This deficiency in the delegation of authority, if not corrected, could have a potential negative impact on Norco's ability to satisfactorily meet Eligibility Requirement 3 and Eligibility Requirement 19.

## **Recommendations**

### **District Recommendation 5:**

As recommended by the 2001 accreditation visiting team, the teams recommend the Board of Trustees implement its recently approved process for self-evaluation (Standard IV.B.1.g).

**See District Recommendations 2 and 3**